

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant acknowledges receipt of the Final Office Action dated October 7, 2003 and the Advisory Action dated January 23, 2004. In the Final Office Action, the Examiner: (1) rejected claims 1-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph and (2) rejected claims 1-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicant hereby requests non-entry of the amendments that Applicant previously filed on November 19, 2003, and that the amendments filed herein be entered and considered instead.

Status of the Claims

Claims 3, 7, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20 and 23-29 are in original form.

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19, 22, 30 and 31 have been amended.

Claim 21 has been canceled.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph because the term “dual seals” lacks antecedent basis. Independent claims 1 and 8 have been amended to provide proper antecedent basis for the term “dual seals”, thereby overcoming the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Baldwin et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,042,152 (hereinafter *Baldwin*) in view of Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art (pages 2-5). The Examiner takes the position that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the liner assembly of *Baldwin* to employ a metal liner assembly in view of Applicant’s disclosure regarding metal liners.

On November 18, 2003, a telephonic interview was conducted between the Applicant and the Examiner to discuss the Final Office Action. During the interview, the Applicant and the Examiner discussed amending the claims to distinguish over *Baldwin* by more clearly defining the dual seals as two distinct elements. With this response, independent claims 1, 8, and 17 have been amended accordingly, and the Examiner indicated in the Advisory Action dated January 23, 2004 that such an amendment appears to overcome the *Baldwin* reference. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

In more detail, Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of *Baldwin* in view of Applicant's disclosure regarding metal liners does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claims 1-16 and 23-29, as amended. In particular, the Examiner states that *Baldwin* teaches a mechanical seal, namely the ribs of the Y-shaped seal 24A extending into grooves 34, 36 in the fitting 14 as depicted in Figure 6, and an elastomeric seal, which is formed when the elastomeric liner 20 cures to bond to the seal 24. However, *Baldwin* fails to teach or suggest "dual seals comprising two distinct types of seals, each seal being formed between different components of the composite riser" in accordance with claim 1, as amended. Similarly, *Baldwin* fails to teach or suggest a method comprising "providing dual seals comprising two distinct types of seals, each seal being formed between different components of the composite riser" in accordance with independent claim 8, as amended. Instead, both the "mechanical" seal and the elastomeric seal of *Baldwin* are formed by the Y-shaped component 24A such that these two seals are not distinct types of seals, nor are these seals formed between different components of the riser. Given these fundamental structural differences, the combination of *Baldwin* and Applicant's disclosure regarding metal liners does not teach or suggest each and every element of independent claim 1 or independent claim 8. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 1 and claim 8 are in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Additionally, claims 2-7, 9-16, and 23-29 each depend from and incorporate the limitations of either independent claim 1 or independent claim 8. Therefore, Applicant submits that claims 2-7, 9-16, and 23-29 are likewise patentably distinguishable over *Baldwin*, alone or in combination with Applicant's disclosure regarding metal liners.

Referring now to claims 17-20, 22, 30, and 31, Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of *Baldwin* and Applicant's disclosure regarding metal liners does not establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to these claims. In particular, the combination fails to teach or suggest "an elastomeric tip provided along an end of the MCI for forming an elastomeric seal with an elastomeric shear ply provided on the outside of the liner assembly; and a mechanical seal surface on the inner surface of the MCI proximate said elastomeric tip for forming a mechanical seal with a metal transition ring of the liner assembly, wherein the elastomeric seal and the mechanical seal are separate and distinct seals" in accordance with amended claim 17. Given these fundamental structural differences, the combination of *Baldwin* and Applicant's disclosure regarding metal liners

does not teach or suggest each and every element of independent claim 17. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 17 is in condition for allowance over the art of record.

Additionally, claims 18-20, 22, 30 and 31 each depend from and incorporate the limitations of independent claim 17. Therefore, Applicant submits that claims 18-20, 22, 30 and 31 are likewise patentably distinguishable over *Baldwin*, alone or in combination with Applicant's disclosure regarding metal liners.

Second Supplemental IDS

Applicant submits herewith a second supplemental IDS listing: (1) the *PCT International Preliminary Examination Report* dated December 16, 2003 for the corresponding PCT application of the above-styled matter, and (2) the *PCT International Search Report* dated March 10, 2003 for PCT/US 02/38662, which is a foreign counterpart application of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/010,191 entitled "Multiple Seal Design for Composite Risers and Tubing for Offshore Applications", which was referred to and incorporated by reference in the above-styled matter.

Applicant also submits herewith an electronic Information Disclosure Statement (eIDS), which includes a listing of the U.S. Patents and Printed Applications that were cited in the above-referenced PCT Reports but were not previously submitted by the Applicant.

CONCLUSION

Consideration of the foregoing amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the application, and withdrawal of the rejections and objections is respectfully requested by Applicant. No new matter is introduced by way of the amendment. It is believed that each ground of rejection raised in the Final Office Action dated October 7, 2003 has been fully addressed. If any fee is due as a result of the filing of this paper please appropriately charge such fee to Deposit Account Number 03-2769 of Conley Rose, P.C., Houston, Texas. If a petition for extension of time is necessary in order for this paper to be deemed timely filed, please consider this a petition therefore.

If a telephone conference would facilitate the resolution of any issue or expedite the prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below.

Respectfully submitted,
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.

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